

"Can McLoughlin Come Back?" Is the Leading Question on Eve of the National Tennis Tournament Inaugural

"COMET" LIKELY TO REGAIN HIS TENNIS HONORS

McLoughlin Even Favorite With Other Luminaries in National Singles.

TITLE QUESTION MORE OPEN THAN IN PAST

By DANIEL.

On the eve of the thirty-sixth American championship lawn tennis tournament, to be opened on the turf courts of the West Side Tennis Club at Forest Hills to-morrow morning, we find ourselves in a rather anomalous position. There is no favorite.

In the light of recent happenings we cannot concede any candidate for the crown a tangible advantage over the other leading aspirants. The defeat of William M. Johnston, national champion, by Ichiya Kumagai of Japan in the Newport final, the victories of Clarence J. Griffin over Richard Norris Williams 2d, title winner in 1914, the rapid rise of Joseph J. Armstrong and Watson M. Washburn and the uncertainty regarding the real condition of Maurice E. McLoughlin are only a few of the factors that make the championship question a decidedly open one.

Prophecy Very Hazardous.

If one does take it upon himself to name the probable winner of the title he must set up as a prophet or confess himself governed largely by sentiment. Personally, we are inclined to believe that McLoughlin will come back; that he will beat Williams in the final round after having disposed of Johnston in the semi-finals. This is not to be regarded as an attempt at prophecy. It is nothing more than a hunch, born of admiration for the kind of tennis played by the Comet and a view of McLoughlin in action at Forest Hills last week.

Prophecy in tennis becomes more hazardous every year, and doings of great men this season have often reminded us that trying to name the winner this time was even more dangerous than ever. How many were there who supported Johnston before the 1915 tournament? Who conceded Kumagai more than a chance of beating Johnston at Newport or thought that Washburn would play so brilliantly against Armstrong at Southampton? Evidently there is no telling in tennis.

Doubles Match To-morrow.

Great as is ordinarily the incentive to strive for the American title it is doubly so this year, for the champion here will be the only official leader in the tennis world. The great war has forced the suspension of championship competition in England, on the Continent and in Australasia. Davis cup matches are in abeyance. The American tournament becomes the world classic and the general calibre of the field of 128 makes it certain that the winner will be well worthy of the place and the honor.

The feature to-morrow will be the challenge round for the national doubles championship, with Johnston and Griffin defending the laurels they wrested last year from McLoughlin and Thomas Bundy against McLoughlin and Ward Dawson. The match will be started at 2:30 P. M. The Comet and his young partner, after winning the Pacific coast title, emerged victorious from the recent national eliminations at Onwentsa, defeating George M. Church and Willis E. Davis in the final.

In addition to the championship singles and the challenge round of the doubles the national tournament will include championship singles for boys and juniors and an invitation mixed doubles competition. The boys and juniors events will bring together lads who have won various sectional tournaments organized this year as part of the propaganda of the National Association to foster the sport among the younger element. This movement has already shown splendid results and is bound to prove of greater worth in years to come.

Reasons for the Revolt.

The tournament will be the second held at Forest Hills, which received the tennis hosts last year. Every one of the thirty-four previous national tournaments had been staged at Newport and it took quite a struggle to get the classic away from the summer capital of society. After two years of non-championship tennis, Newport is again hankering after the big event, and indications point to its having already organized a movement to bring the championships back to the Casino courts next summer.

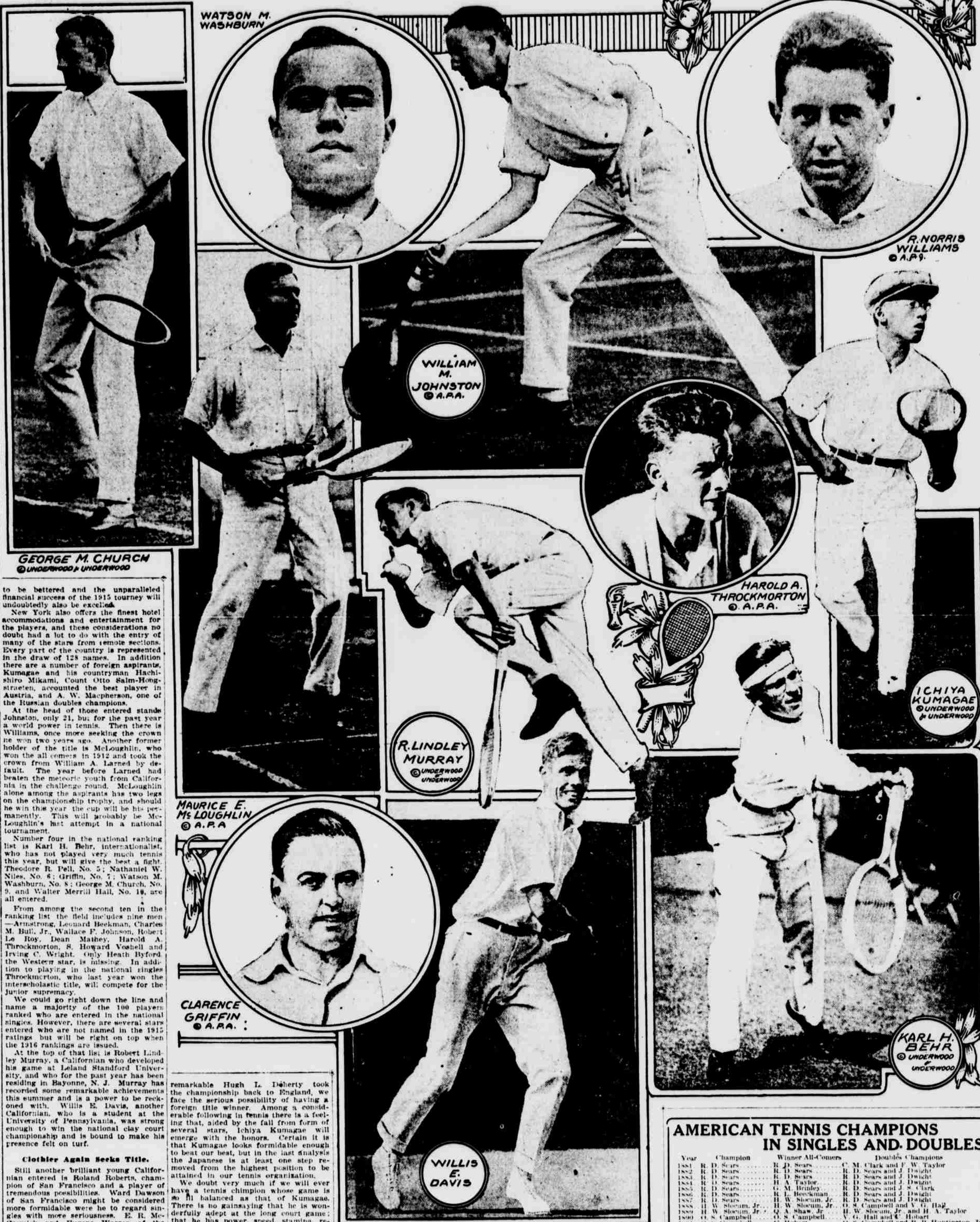
The revolt against Newport was the development of years of dissatisfaction among the players with conditions at Newport. Despite its having lost the nationals, the Newport gallery has yet to learn its lesson. In the recent tourney at the Casino, while some of the best players in the country were in action, the crowd in the stands talked so loudly that the voices of the umpire and the men on the side lines were drowned. Williams finally declined to play on the grand stand court.

It was the same conversion of the national tourney into an excuse for getting together and discussing everything under the sun except tennis that was the primary factor in the transfer of the tourney to this city. It is very doubtful if Newport will again get the nationals within the next few years.

Stars Who Will Play.

At Forest Hills every requisite is more than met. New York is one of the great tennis centres in the world. Forest Hills is only fifteen minutes from the centre of Manhattan. The fares are low, transportation facilities, especially during the tournament, splendid, the thirty-two courts are the best in the country and the facilities for the spectators unequalled elsewhere. The record for attendance established last year is bound to be bettered and the unparalleled financial success of the 1915 tourney will undoubtedly also be exceeded.

STARS OF THE COURTS WHO LOOM UP LARGE IN AMERICAN CLASSIC TO BE STAGED ON TURF AT FOREST HILLS



GEORGE M. CHURCH
A.A.A.

WATSON M. WASHBURN
A.A.A.

WILLIAM M. JOHNSTON
A.A.A.

R. NORRIS WILLIAMS
A.A.A.

HAROLD A. THROCKMORTON
A.A.A.

ICHIIYA KUMAGAI
A.A.A.

R. LINDLEY MURRAY
A.A.A.

MAURICE E. McLOUGHLIN
A.A.A.

CLARENCE GRIFFIN
A.A.A.

WILLIS E. DAVIS
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Remarkable Hugh L. Doherty Took the Championship Back to England, We Face the Possibility of Having a Foreign Title Winner.

Among a considerable following in tennis there is a feeling that, aided by the fall from form of several stars, Ichiya Kumagai will emerge with the honors. Certain it is that Kumagai looks formidable enough to beat our best, but in the last analysis the Japanese is at least one step removed from the highest position to be attained in our national organization.

Clothes Again Seeks Title.

Still another brilliant young Californian entered in Roland Roberts, champion of San Francisco and a player of tremendous possibilities. Ward Dawson of San Francisco might be considered more formidable were he to regard singles with more seriousness. E. R. McCormick and Eugene Warren of the University of Southern California, Harold Van Dyke Johns of Leland Stanford, R. C. Van Vleet of the University of California, Kenneth Hawkes and Grayson Clover complete the greatest roster of Californians which has ever entered for the national championship.

Among the more formidable Easterners entered who have not yet been mentioned are William J. Clothier, national champion of 1906, who still plays with dash and power; Alfred H. Man, Jr.; E. H. Whitney, former Harvard captain; Richard Harte of Harvard, who has been giving an excellent account of himself in fast company; Raymond D. Little, "Crack" Hiddle of Philadelphia; Fred Inman, E. P. Larned, George W. Wightman, Robert C. Rand and William Rand. The South sends Douglas S. Watters of New Orleans, its leading player, while from Pittsburg comes that fast youngster, Clark Garland.

The singles tourney will be the fourth to be played under the playing through system instituted in 1915. Previous to that year the champion was not required to play through. He waited calmly for the winner of all the others to meet him in the challenge round. This procedure sent a very much fagged out player against the champion, and in consequence the titleholder most often won.

The national association finally recognized the unfairness of that system. This year, as in 1905, when the

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AMERICAN TENNIS CHAMPIONS IN SINGLES AND DOUBLES

Year	Champion	Winner All-Comers	Doubles Champions
1881	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	C. M. Clark and F. W. Taylor
1882	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1883	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1884	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1885	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1886	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1887	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1888	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1889	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1890	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1891	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1892	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1893	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1894	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1895	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1896	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1897	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1898	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1899	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1900	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1901	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1902	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1903	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1904	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1905	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1906	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1907	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1908	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1909	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1910	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1911	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1912	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1913	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1914	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1915	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight
1916	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears	R. D. Sears and J. Dwight

The challenge round in singles was abolished in 1913 and the playing-through system was instituted.

A little doubles playing with Clarence J. Griffin, and has taken a complete rest from singles. He counts on entering the national event in fine condition—and everybody hopes his calculations will be realized.

Again we want to emphasize the fact that it's a very open tournament, and that the winner will be a champion well worthy of the name.

The doubles proposition appears to favor Johnston and Griffin. They have been playing together too long to be beaten by a team like McLoughlin and Dawson. It will be a hard match, but the champions will remain supreme.

SEARS AND LARNED WON SEVEN TENNIS TITLES IN SINGLES

"Richard the First" Enjoyed an Unbroken Tenure and Retired Undefeated.

PIONEER TOURNEY IN 1881

National championship lawn tennis history in America extends over a period of thirty-six years, during which fourteen individuals have held the title in singles. It was in 1881 that the first national tournament was staged at Newport and Richard D. Sears emerged with the championship.

For seven years in succession Sears held away—a remarkable record that might have been even more remarkable but for an injury which forced him to retire after he had defended the honors successfully against Henry W. Slocum, Jr. In 1887, only William A. Larned has equaled Sears's feat, but Larned's tenure was not unbroken. Larned first won the championship in 1901, kept it in 1902, but lost it to Hugh L. Doherty of England in 1903. In 1907 Larned began his tenure of five successive years.

There were several so-called national championship tourneys before 1881, but none was official. There was no national governing body and the game was in a very chaotic condition. It had been introduced from England in 1874 and there was no uniformity about the rules or the implements. In the early days the game was played with ordinary rubber balls. The distance from the service line to the net was only twenty-six feet. Dr. James Dwight and Sears soon established their supremacy in the new game, which even in the press of those days had to undergo considerable ridicule as a "sport fit only for ladies."

Englishman a Winner.

Tennis developed very rapidly and the leaders soon began to realize the need for a central association. In 1880 there were several tournaments which were styled the national championship. One was held right in this section, on the courts of the Staten Island Cricket and Baseball Club—now the Lawn Tennis and Cricket Club, at Livingston.

It was the first tournament open to all comers, and O. E. Woodhouse, from England, was the winner. All previous events had been closed to various sections, and the lack of competitive interest among the players retarded the progress of the sport. In the spring of 1881 several clubs got together and issued a call for a meeting to organize a national body. On May 21, the United States National Lawn Tennis Association was formed, and the recognized English rules were adopted. Some time later the association courts at Newport were adopted for the first official national tournament.

Sears not only won the first title that year, but he also introduced volleying to American tennis. He walked through the field with ridiculous ease. In those days deuce sets were allowed only in the final. Sears did not lose a set in the entire tourney and in the final defeated W. E. Olsen of Staten Island, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2.

Challenge Round Instituted.

While Sears and Dr. Dwight were head and shoulders above the rest in the singles, they could do little in doubles, the championship being won by C. M. Clark and F. W. Taylor of Philadelphia.

In 1882 Sears again won the singles and with Dr. Dwight succeeded in winning the doubles, beating Clark and Taylor in the semifinals. In 1883 the challenge round was instituted, and it was not until after the 1912 tournament that this unfair system was abolished and the playing-through system was instituted.

In 1884 H. A. Taylor of Harvard won the all-comers and lost to Sears in the challenge round, 6-0, 1-6, 6-3, 6-2. The second set was the first Sears had ever lost at Newport. H. A. Brinley of Trinity was Sears's victim in the challenge round of 1885, and in 1886 R. L. Beckman lost to the tennis master in a similar struggle. In 1887 Sears came back in 1886 and defeated Hovey in five sets. Wrenn had beaten Larned in a five set final.

Wrenn was again the winner in 1905. In 1906 the third American champion, Oliver Campbell, appeared on the scene. In the challenge match Campbell defeated Slocum, three out of four sets. Campbell was also the champion in 1907. This tournament marked the first appearance of William A. Larned of Cornell University, who was rated among the first twenty.